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ABSTRACT

This handbook is a guide to help educators and administrators with the decisions they face in the design of an arts assessment. The guide is divided into two broad parts: Part 1: "Background for Thoughtful Arts Education Assessment"; and Part 2: "Assessment Design in Action." The guide includes: (1) a brief background on the standards and assessment movement; (2) a basic three-phase plan to orchestrate a district or state arts assessment; (3) a set of flexible steps to lead people through planning, developing, and implementing their program design; (4) activities that will help address key issues and make administrative decisions to carry out the assessment; and (5) concrete examples drawn from existing state arts assessment efforts, and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Arts Assessment. Contains 17 references. Appended is a performance exercise in dance for grades 9 through 12. (BT)

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Envisioning Arts Assessment: A Process Guide for Assessing Arts Education in School Districts and States.

Nancy Pistone
Debra Brzoska

Council of Chief State School Officers, Washington, DC.
Arts Education Partnership, Washington, DC.

SO 034 427

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ENVISIONING ARTS ASSESSMENT

A Process Guide for Assessing Arts Education in School Districts and States

Nancy Pistone

A Publication of
the Arts Education Partnership and
the Council of Chief State School Officers

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The Council, established in 1927, represents the chief state school officers' view on federal education policy. The organization undertakes projects to help state education agencies understand, devise, and execute policy, adopt initiatives to promote educational reform efforts, and engage in collaborative exchanges to share best practices and model solutions. These endeavors result in the development of many resources, which are widely disseminated to CCSSO's state constituencies, other partner organizations, the education community, related federal agencies, and the U.S. Congress. The Council's work is supported by membership dues, the foundation community, and governmental agencies.

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2002

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Richard J. Deasy
Director
Arts Education Partnership
202-336-7065
Fax: 202-408-8081
www.aep-arts.org

Council of Chief State School Officers
One Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001
202-408-5505
Fax: 202-408-8072
www.ccsso.org

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ENVISIONING ARTS ASSESSMENT

A Process Guide for

ASSESSING ARTS EDUCATION

in

SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND STATES

Nancy Pistone
Arts Education Consultant
Center for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Ohio Department of Education

With Additional Material Written by

Debra Brzoska, Director
Visual and Performing Arts
Vancouver School District
Vancouver, Washington

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Overview of the Contents

Imagine yourself the designer of a large-scale arts assessment. You are the person in your district or state responsible for coordinating the assessment of student learning in the visual and performing arts. The task will require you to make several important conceptual, technical, and administrative decisions.

This handbook is a guide to help with the decisions you face in the design of an arts assessment. It poses important questions for you to consider and helps you answer them. It also offers informational support and useful activities that will generate various strategies and assessment design options for you to consider. The guide is intended to be both a practical tool and a reference. You may want to browse through the entire booklet first to get a full picture of what it covers, then go back to various chapters when you are ready to work through them. Several concepts are discussed briefly, but specific references to other sources that contain further descriptions of them are included.

In this guide, you will find

1. **A brief background on the standards and assessment movement**
2. **A basic three-phase plan to orchestrate your district or state arts assessment**
3. **A set of flexible steps to lead you through planning, developing, and implementing your program design**
4. **Activities that will help you address key issues and make administrative decisions to carry out your assessment**
5. **Concrete examples drawn from existing state arts assessment efforts, and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Arts Assessment**

The first part of this guide reviews the thinking behind large-scale assessment. The topics briefly addressed include the history, theory, and values that surround the assessment movement. The summary will serve to remind you and the committees who work with you of the original intent of standards-based reform. Other sections in the opening highlight the contributions of the 1997 NAEP Arts initiative and the rationale for launching an arts assessment program.

The second part of the guide focuses on the practice of large-scale arts assessment. It emphasizes the application of concepts and suggests a sequence of phases, steps, and activities in an assessment design process. Each phase highlights key responsibilities and challenges. Specific examples, useful ideas, and common questions are included to support your efforts in each stage. The final chapter discusses the benefits of assessment to arts education.

Whether or not you have expertise in the fine arts or assessment, you should find this guide a useful resource. It will help you examine your assessment activity and shape a program in reference to your district or state arts standards. Much thoughtful, significant work has already taken place in the field of large-scale assessment across many subjects, including the arts. One intent of this book is to draw upon and share the insights of these efforts. The other is to guide the design of an arts assessment compelling enough to inform and strengthen arts education for all students.

Part One

Background for Thoughtful Arts Education Assessment

Assessment has both common sense and technical meanings. We assess a situation as the basis for deciding a future course of action. Assessing how well students are learning in the arts is an essential and daily part of teaching. But assessment has taken on new significance – and new technical demands – with the rise of the standards-based movement for school improvement. Now we need to know how a school, school district and an entire state is doing to help all students meet established expectations for learning, including learning in the arts. So we need "large scale" assessments of students that often have major consequences in terms of promotion and graduation for students or financial incentives for schools and teachers: these are "high stakes" assessments. Where did this movement come from? What are its benefits? How do we measure the unique learning that occurs in the arts with large groups of students? What can we learn from the experience of the federal government in developing and conducting the 1997 National Assessment of Educational Progress in the arts? The following chapters explore these questions, offer answers, and suggest resources for to you consult to guide your thinking and action.

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CHAPTER 3

WHY TAKE ON THE CHALLENGE OF ASSESSMENT?

State and district arts education leaders around the country have been working to establish effective arts education assessments in order to get the arts "on the table" of taught curriculum. Statewide arts assessment efforts are in constant flux and often suffer from inadequate public understanding about the value of arts education and a low priority compared to other subjects.

While this can be discouraging, it should not imply that arts educators abandon efforts for statewide arts assessment. As of this writing, 17 states have initiatives in place that support statewide arts assessment and still others are pending. The very process of working toward a statewide arts assessment yields value for state and local arts educators. By participating in the design of assessment frameworks and tasks, arts teachers and curriculum specialists increase their knowledge of effective arts curriculum, instruction, and classroom-based assessment. Even in states where arts assessment has moved to the back burner, local arts educators have benefited from the development process.

At the individual state level, the ebb and flow of education reform initiatives have alternately fostered and undermined arts assessment. States tend to develop assessment of core curriculum in a classical order that most educators can recite by rote: English/Language Arts, Math, science, social studies, (then) the other areas – including the arts – as time and funding permit. Few if any states have been able to sustain their education reform efforts long enough to 'get around' to the arts.

Scott Shuler and Selena Connealy, "The Evolution of State Arts Assessment: From Sisyphus to Stone Soup", Arts Education Policy Review, Vol. 11, No. 1, Sept/Oct 1998., p. 14.

LINKING LARGE-SCALE ASSESSMENT WITH CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

With the growing interest in performance assessment, statewide assessment efforts in other subjects provide interesting learning tools for prospective arts assessors. Vermont, for example, is well known for its pioneering attempts to link large-scale assessments with classroom efforts through its portfolio performance assessments of writing and math. Teachers from across the state scored portfolios using rubrics and exemplars and the professional development of the teachers was an important aspect of the system. Even though the system did not meet its goals in terms of large-scale accountability, local administrators and teachers saw positive impact of the process on instruction. (Eliot Asp, "The Relationship Between Large-Scale and Classroom Assessment," *Assessing Student Learning*, ASCD, 1998, pp.31-32).

Kentucky also attempted to incorporate large-scale and classroom assessment into the same system. While such attempts are appealing, Asp cautions that by attempting to serve a variety of purposes with one assessment system, "the system may not be served very well. The solution or middle ground is not yet in sight." (Asp, p. 35)

Much is still to be learned about performance assessment in general, and about arts performance assessment in particular. As increasing numbers of arts educators take on the challenge of arts assessment, it will be important to share the work widely in order to collectively advance the field.

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Linking Arts Efforts to Large-Scale Assessments in Other Subjects

One can travel anywhere in the country today and ask local teachers for the current acronym of high stakes tests in their state: FCAT in Florida (ef-cat), WASL in Washington State (wazzul) and so forth. In states where scores on these tests are tied to high stakes accountability measures, teachers describe the very real impact of these tests on the classroom such as endless practice tests ("drill-and-kill") and mandated increased instructional time spent only on tested subjects.

It is not surprising that arts educators worry that this kind of test-prep frenzy may lead to decreased instructional time in the arts. It would be wise for arts educators to become informed about high stakes tests in their districts and states in order to examine sensible linkages between arts learning and other tested content:

1. ***Take a look at the test preparation materials.*** What kinds of questions are being asked? What kind of visual symbols and images are used? What are students being asked to think about and how?

2. ***Stay current.*** Anyone who has not recently reviewed tests of writing or math may be surprised by the changes. Students are increasingly being asked to "show your thinking" in math problem-solving tasks. More and more, student writing is being scored not solely by grammar and spelling, but according to such traits as "voice" and the student's ability to "match voice to intended purpose and audience." (Washington Assessment of Student Learning in Writing) Similarities between this approach to writing and approaches to composition in the arts are obvious.

3. ***Gather arts educators to analyze state assessment materials together.*** Explore sensible links that can be made with authentic learning in the arts.

4. ***Encourage conversations among arts teachers and classroom colleagues*** – grade level elementary school meetings or cross-department meetings at the secondary level – where teachers can begin conversations about important linkage and learning across content boundaries.

While the controversy rages about whether or not the arts should be instrumental to learning in other subjects, the fact remains that arts specialists and classroom teachers share the same students. Arts teachers are part of the fabric of the total school and, as such, face the same challenges posed by high-stakes testing. By familiarizing themselves with expectations for their children on high-stakes tests in other subjects, arts specialists can discover sensible and legitimate connections with important arts learning.

CHAPTER 4

FEATURES OF EFFECTIVE LARGE-SCALE ASSESSMENT DESIGN

When considering large-scale assessment of arts education, arts administrators and program coordinators will be able to refer to several of the assessment initiatives mentioned in this handbook–initiatives that provide important lessons for envisioning your own assessment needs. Here are four important features to consider;

1. **Take time.** The large-scale assessment programs that were studied took three to five years from inception to final implementation, with a full year devoted just to planning. All demonstrated that multi-year effort is required to fully develop several phases of activity. Further, when statewide assessment efforts faced problems and criticism, the reason often cited was too little time for building teacher and public support for the program.

2. **Understand the distinct phases of activity along with the assistance and funding required for each.** As successful projects have shown, activities such as writing test items and tasks involve planning, design, development, review, and revision, and field-testing. Adequate funding is needed to carry out each process, which may also require the help of specialists versed in areas such as test format, measurement, professional scoring, and reporting approaches. The matter of funding is critical particularly in a large-scale arts assessment that requires the purchase of specialized consumable supplies, visual art reproductions, and audio and video equipment and technology.

3. **Apply collaborative strategies from the outset.** More than any other reform undertaking, formal assessment can be a volatile issue, especially in the arts. For this reason and others, the assessment agenda should be mutually determined and controlled by those with program responsibility and a vital interest in arts education, including parents, students, administrators, project sponsors, artists, and arts teachers.

   Repeatedly, effective programs point out the value of including arts practitioners throughout each phase. One promising model required that teachers be actively involved in developing, scoring, and interpreting the assessments. Only in this way will those who must implement the system become fully committed to it. As one theory and practice study found, when teachers participate in making sense of student responses and the evidence of learning, their understanding is deeper and more meaningful than if they relied on another person's interpretation.

4. **Link assessment to the same standards across district and state schools.** Although this seems quite obvious, reviewers of state assessment documents report that alignment between assessment and standards is often weak. To better ensure the linkage, strong assessment programs maintain internal control over the development of their performance tests in contrast to relying completely on commercially-prepared versions. This also ensures that thinking skills in the arts disciplines are emphasized and that students are required to apply what they know to solve complex arts-based problems. Successful assessments also forge strong links to curriculum and professional development.

As compared to measurement, assessment is inevitably involved with questions of what is of value, rather than simple correctness. Questions of value require entry and discussion. In this light, assessment is not a matter for outside experts to design; rather, it is an episode in which students and teachers might learn, through reflection and debate, about the standards of good work and the rules of evidence.

Wolf, Bixby, Glenn, & Gardner

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Part Two

Assessment Design in Action

Planning, development and implementation constitute the key phases in an assessment design. The following pages make clear the stages and steps that you will have to consider carefully to ensure a successful large-scale assessment of learning in the arts. Each chapter reflects background research of leading state and national large-scale efforts in the area of assessment and the arts. As you read through the design phases, consider each step and activity as an of a flexible and reflective process whose purpose is to be meaningful and useful to you and your diverse stakeholders—students, teachers, parents, and the district and state board of education initiatives already in place.

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CHAPTER 5

PLAN AND CLARIFY

Key steps in the planning phase include:

1. **Identify members of a planning and design committee.**
2. **Establish the purpose(s) of your arts assessment program.**
3. **Develop guidelines for the design and implementation of the assessment.**
4. **Create a timeline for accomplishing major milestones.**
5. **Examine and learn from existing large-scale assessment and arts efforts.**

STEP 1:

Identify members of a planning and design committee. Think about inviting individuals with a vital interest in arts education who can serve in an advisory or steering capacity throughout program development and implementation. Select members to represent constituencies important to your situation, such as those suggested.

Activity: Identify planning committee members
Arts teachers for dance, music, theatre and visual arts, also from various size districts and statewide regions, grade levels, and diverse backgrounds
State Education Department staff and consultants such as those for testing, measurement, and arts curriculum
School district administrators such as superintendents, principals, curriculum and instructional supervisors
Professional development regional facilitators
Parents
Higher Education faculty in the arts and teacher education
Community representatives such as members of relevant professional organizations, older art students, practicing artists, political arts advocates, and other program stakeholders

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STEP 2:

Establish the purpose of your arts assessment program. With your planning group, determine your assessment goals. You may want to prioritize them if you have more than one. Remember, different kinds of evidence must be gathered to suit different purposes. Here are examples of district and statewide goals for conducting a large-scale arts assessment.

Activity: Define arts assessment program goals

Population/level Served	Sample Goal
Students	To determine student achievement in meeting arts standards; for graduation requirement
Teachers	To improve classroom arts instruction
Schools	For school-wide accountability and to improve arts curriculum and programs
District/State	To establish district/state profiles of student achievement in one or more of the arts disciplines

For a complete list of the 17 states with arts assessments and the goals and essential characteristics of their programs, see State-of-the-Art in Large-Scale Fine Arts Assessments, a report by Westat, 2001 for the Maryland State Department of Education, listed in the references section. Also, CCSSO publishes, an Annual Survey of State Student Assessment Programs, which includes information on states that are developing or have developed arts assessments.

A review of the 17 states currently involved in large-scale arts assessment reveals two common purposes: to establish a state profile of student achievement in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts; and to improve instruction and learning in these areas. One of these states uses its assessment results for school accountability and one as a graduation requirement.

STEP 3:

Develop guidelines for the design and implementation of the assessment. Once your assessment goals are established, the planning committee can begin to determine program guidelines by addressing the important questions below, and by identifying others that may be relevant to your situation. The decisions you make about these matters will provide a common reference point as you move forward with each phase of development.

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Activity: Discuss these questions to determine your assessment program guidelines and characteristics.

Topic/Question	Example
Program Features	
Which arts disciplines will be assessed?	Dance, music, theatre and/or visual arts
What grade levels will be assessed?	Grades 4, 8, and 12 such as NAEP, or others
Will the arts assessment be a stand-alone test or will fine arts questions be included on other subject area achievement tests?	A separate arts test for grade 10; fine arts questions included on the Social Studies achievement test for grades 4 and 7 *
What type of test will it be? i.e, paper/pencil (written), performance or portfolio?	A combination of written and performance tasks with a portfolio component.*
Will the test be mandatory or voluntary for schools and districts?	Schools have the option of administering the voluntary fine arts test by completing an enrollment form provided to principals by the state's division of assessment *
Test Development	
Who will develop the fine arts test?	Arts teachers across grade levels will be recruited, trained and hired by the state to write test items and pilot them in classrooms. Additional experts will be identified to review items for content concerns and bias. Specialists in test writing will assist teachers.
Test Administration	
When will the assessment be administered?	The arts test will be administered each spring during a five-week "test window." Districts may schedule the test anytime during that period.*
How will the arts test be administered?	District schools will administer the (voluntary or mandated) test during the state's achievement testing period. Testing materials are sent two weeks prior to this timeframe*
What professional development will be available to districts prior to administering the arts assessment?	Procedures for administering the arts test will be reviewed as part of regional meetings held to address questions pertaining to subject area achievement tests.*
Are special education students included in the arts test?	Special education students are included. Individual Education Plan (IEP) team members decide whether any test accommodations are necessary.
Are students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) included?	LEP students are included with accommodations either specified in a student IEP or frequently used to test the student.
Scoring and Reporting	
Who will score the fine arts tests?	State arts teachers assisted by assessment specialists will score the tests. The state will hire and train teachers over a three-week period in June to conduct the scoring at regional scoring sites.*
How will scores be reported?	Results may be reported by total (composite score), by arts discipline (percent scaled right), by level of achievement, or by state art standards.
Who will receive test results?	Individual and group results will be provided at the district, school and student levels.*
Resources	
What resources will be available to assist teachers in helping students perform well?	Visual and performing arts standards; curriculum frameworks; regional assessment facilitators; fine arts released test items.

Examples followed by an asterisk (*) are drawn from actual assessment programs to show how others addressed the question.

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STEP 4:

Create a timeline for accomplishing major milestones. As mentioned previously, most effective large-scale assessments provide for multi-year effort. With a broad view of the distinct phases of activity required, you should set a timeframe for completing important responsibilities at each stage. Remember, too, that it will take considerable time to build arts teacher capacities to participate in the assessment, as well as to garner community and public support for the program.

Activity: Establish a timeline for reaching target milestones. To be realistic about the time required, consider your staff experience levels and available resources.
(The guide's 3 phases & steps will help identify milestones.)

(Number of Years Optional)	Selected Example Milestones
Planning, Year 1	❒ Select planning/advisory team ❒ Establish program goals ❒ Determine all assessment design features including professional development needs ❒ Study effective district/state arts testing models ❒ Develop framework and test/item specifications (blueprint) for the arts assessment
Development, Year 2	❒ Engage arts teacher participation in all aspects of test development ❒ Establish regional sites for training test writers and scorers ❒ Generate a "pool" or bank of items/tasks; conduct pilot tests and refine items ❒ Provide regular updates to districts about the assessment
Initial Implementation, Year 3	❒ Coordinate the field test by selecting schools and producing test booklets and materials ❒ Conduct the field test ❒ Analyze field test data to select and refine items and scoring guides
Full Implementation, Year 4	❒ Announce the voluntary or required assessment system-wide with all details for enrollment and participation ❒ Administer the arts assessment during year-end state achievement tests ❒ Analyze data and report findings

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STEP 5:

Examine and learn from existing large-scale assessment and arts efforts. Over the past ten years, there have been significant accomplishments in arts education assessment. National organizations and state agencies have experimented in the fields of large-scale assessment and the arts to develop well-tested program models and to provide practical guidance. It is safe to say that most inquiries you have, challenges you face, or examples you need in launching your district or state program, are specifically addressed in one or more of the detailed sources listed below. Having this material available at the outset will save you and your committees from "reinventing the wheel."

Activity: Gather information sources that help clarify large-scale assessment concepts and which illustrate arts assessment program ideas.

Top Choices to Get Started

- ❒ *Arts Education Assessment Framework*, a publication prepared by CCSSO for the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), 1994. Provides a blueprint that guides the development of an arts assessment. Organizes the assessment around the artistic processes common to all four arts areas–creating, performing, and responding.
- ❒ *Arts Education Assessment and Exercise Specifications*, a publication prepared by the College Board for NAGB, 1994. Provides an overall description of the construction, review and scoring of test items in drama, music, theatre, and visual arts. Also includes guidelines for selecting stimulus material in each arts area.
- ❒ *The NAEP 1997 Arts Report Card, Eighth-Grade Findings from the National Assessment of Educational Progress*, 1998. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. This report includes sample test items and tasks in all four arts disciplines with scoring criteria.
- ❒ *State-of-the-Art in Large-Scale Fine Arts Assessment*, a report by Westat for the Maryland State Department of Education, 2001. The most current listing of all states with mandated or voluntary visual and performing arts assessments. Includes the essential characteristics of each program including item format, reporting strategies, lessons learned, and contact information.
- ❒ *Critical Issues in Large-Scale Assessment*, a publication of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), 2001. A Resource Guide to provide practical guidance and support for the sound design, development, and implementation of large-scale assessment.
- ❒ *Handbook for Professional Development in Assessment Literacy*, a publication of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), 2001. A resource to states and districts as they develop and implement assessment systems aligned to standards for purposes of improving student learning through accountability and school improvement. Includes a complete glossary of relevant terms to the assessment field. Also included are presentation materials designed to increase the assessment literacy of state and district staff, teachers, parents and policymakers.

On-line Sources

- ❒ The Arts Education Partnership: http://www.aep-arts.org
- ❒ NAEP web site: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/arts/
- ❒ CCSSO - SCASS Arts Assessment web site: http://www.ccsso.org/scass/p_arts/index.html

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CHAPTER 6

DEVELOP AND GENERATE

Key steps in the development phase include:

1. **Organize test development teams experienced in the arts disciplines to be assessed.**
2. **Create a framework to capture the range of content in your arts standards.**
3. **Write test items and performance tasks with scoring guides based on your framework specifications.**
4. **Review assessment items to identify areas that require change or revision.**
5. **Pilot test the items and tasks in school district classrooms.**

STEP 1:

Organize test development teams experienced in the arts disciplines to be assessed. Almost all states recruit, hire, and train classroom arts teachers for their writing teams. They also hire assessment specialists and include other arts discipline experts to assist in the development process. There are several nonprofit education agencies in the assessment field that have consultants that can help facilitate all aspects of test development and scoring, as well as train teachers in these areas. On the next page is a sample memo used by one state to recruit teachers for committee membership. Note the procedures followed and the qualifications required for teacher participation.

Activity: Recruit arts teachers statewide to write test questions and exercises. Hire additional assessment specialists from external agencies as needed. (The sample memo on the next page will help you identify the aspects of recruiting and preparing teachers to participate on writing teams.)

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
2002-2003 ARTS ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE MEMBER RECRUITMENT

MEMORANDUM

To: Superintendents, Principals and Arts Content Specialists
From: Director, Division of Curriculum and Assessment
Date: May 19, 2002

The Department of Education is seeking State classroom arts Teachers in the areas of dance, music, theatre and visual arts for a limited number of memberships on the assessment development committee for the State's Fine Arts Assessment Program. Committee members work with the Department of Education's assessment coordinator, contractor and other specialists to develop, review, and refine visual and performing arts test questions.

Committee members must have content experience in one arts discipline, understanding of and direct experience with the State's Arts Curriculum Frameworks and Standards, and experience at the grade levels being tested. We are looking specifically for teachers in the following grade levels and art subject areas:

Grade 4/5	Dance	2-3 teachers
Grade 4/5	Music	4-5 teachers
Grade 4/5	Theatre	2-3 teachers
Grade 4/5	Visual Arts	4-5 teachers
Grade 9/10	Dance	2-3 teachers
Grade 9/10	Music	4-5 teachers
Grade 9/10	Theatre	2-3 teachers
Grade 9/10	Visual Arts	4-5 teachers

Committee members are required to attend a three-day summer meeting and at least two meetings during the school year. Other meetings may be called as necessary.

The Department will reimburse districts for substitute teacher expenses for meetings during the school year. Meals, mileage, and lodging (when necessary) are provided by the Department of Education. Committee members will receive an honorarium for attending summer meetings.

Please consider eligible staff and encourage such persons to complete and submit the enclosed application. Completed applications must be received by 5:00 p.m., June 16, 2002.

STEP 2:

Create a framework to capture the range of content in your arts standards. The framework is a critical feature of assessment design. Its purpose is to specify the knowledge and skills to be assessed based on your arts standards, or in other words, to determine the content of assessment questions and tasks. Think of the framework as the blueprint that will guide test item development. You can use it to write and distribute questions among content strands that reflects the relative importance and value you give to each strand within an arts discipline. You may want to create a separate framework for each arts discipline to address its special characteristics. The NAEP theatre assessment framework is shown below as an example. You want to create your framework(s) in reference to your district/state arts standards or learning outcomes and curriculum.

Activity: Create a framework for each arts discipline to be assessed to determine the content of test items and performance tasks.

EXAMPLE

NAEP THEATRE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

ARTS PROCESSES FOR THEATRE

CREATING/PERFORMING

When creating and performing in theatre, students:

- ❑ develop scripts and scenarios;
- ❑ develop characters through an acting process;
- ❑ make design and technical choices to communicate locale and mood for dramatic material for theatre, film and television; and
- ❑ direct by interpreting dramatic texts and organizing time and people in planning and rehearsing improvised and scripted scenes.

RESPONDING

When perceiving, analyzing, interpreting, critiquing, and judging works in theatre, students:

- ❑ describe and analyze artistic choices in their own work and construct meaning;
- ❑ describe and compare elements, styles, genre, media, and dramatic literature;
- ❑ place work in context (personal, social, historical, and cultural); and
- ❑ evaluate performances as audience and critic.

BASED ON SPECIFIC CONTENT FROM THEATRE

Applying *KNOWLEDGE* of:

- Different contexts for theatre
  - personal,
  - social,
  - cultural, and
  - historical
- Aesthetics
- Form and structure of theatre
- Theatre processes

Applying cognitive, affective and motor *SKILLS* in:

- Perceiving
- Intellectual/reflective behavior
- Expressive behavior through theatre
- Technical mastery of theatre content

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Step 3:

Write test items and performance tasks with scoring guides based on your framework specifications. Besides the content emphasis of the questions, the development committee also will consider the format of test items before writing. There are various types of questions from which to choose. The NAEP arts exercise guide suggests that the acceptable formats for arts assessment include:

- ❖ constructed-response exercise formats
  - production/performance tasks
  - open-ended questions requiring short written responses
  - open-ended questions requiring extended written responses
- ❖ selected-response (multiple-choice, matching, etc.) items

Test developers should consider allocating a greater percentage of testing time to the item formats that best elicit the range of student abilities valued by the arts content and performance standards and identified in your framework. For example, NAEP framework specifications recommended that the 1997 arts assessment be designed so that students spend 80-90% of the time working on constructed-response exercises and 10-20% of the time on multiple-choice questions.

Your development committee will find it useful to create a grid, like the one below, which specifies the number of questions by type and arts area. Writing test questions begins once the framework specifications are in place.

Grade 8
Number of Questions by Type

	Dance	Music	Theatre	Visual Arts
creating/performing excercises				
short constructed-response				
extended constructed-response				
selected-response *(multiple choice, matching, etc.)*				
TOTALS				

*See **The NAEP 1997 Arts Report Card** for examples of how various question formats are used and combined in a large-scale arts assessment.*

Developing Scoring Guides for Test Items and Tasks. A scoring guide has three components, each of which contributes to its usefulness:

- ***Criteria*** that serve as the basis for judging the student response;
- ***Achievement/performance levels*** for the criteria: a rating scale that is either numerical such as a point scale from 1-4; or qualitative with levels such as basic, proficient and advanced; and
- ***Descriptors*** that clarify the meaning of the criteria at each achievement level (and for each grade level).

Developing scoring guides is a multi-stage process. As questions are developed, test writers should articulate performance criteria and draft an initial version of the scoring guides. Arts content and measurement specialists should help review the scoring guides to ensure that they include criteria consistent with the wording of test questions; also, that they are concise, explicit, and clear and reflect the assessment framework. Next, the draft guides are used to score student responses in pilot and field-testing. The results of these trials are used to further refine the guides.

Pages 28-30 provide a visual arts "performance event" developed by the New York State Education Department and provided here with permission. Note how the example illustrates how a performance task is constructed and the use of a scoring guide with its three components.

Activity: Prepare your writing committee to develop arts test items and scoring guides by examining the example that follows for a visual arts performance task. Discuss the tasks' content, format, timing, directions to the student and scoring criteria. (See the Appendix for sample items/tasks and scoring guides from a performance exercise in dance.)

Performance Event Item

Used with permission of the New York State Education Department

Note: This image has been reduced.

The City Rises by Umberto Boccioni, 1910

Visual Arts
Standards 1&3
Performance Indicators 1(a), (b), (c), (d), 3(a), (b)

Directions: Carefully study the drawing The City Rises, by Umberto Boccioni, and then read the information below. You have five minutes to read Part 1 and study the image.

Part 1: Analysis of the Drawing

Look at the drawing *The City Rises,* by Umberto Boccioni. In this work the artist uses line, value contrast, and composition in certain ways to create a sense of dynamic action and tension.

• **Line**
Boccioni uses lots of short, quick diagonal lines to build up his images and create a sense of energy and movement in the artwork. What other kinds of lines or marks could you use to create a sense of dynamic action and tension?

Continue on the next page

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• **Contrast**
Boccioni also uses contrast to help draw your attention to the central action in the drawing. The massive horse-like image in the foreground stands out against the lightness of the ground underneath and to the left of him, drawing our attention to the curve of his powerful head. What other ways could you use contrast to draw attention to the main theme of a work?

• **Composition**
Certain choices about composition also affect the sense of dynamic action and tension in this work. Notice how much space the main horse takes up in the entire composition, and how the diagonal movement of his body and other images in the drawing lead your eye across the picture plane. What other compositional arrangements could be used to create a sense of action and tension?

Part 2: Sketches for a Composition

Directions: Now you are going to draw two sketches of your own hand that create a sense of dynamic action and tension.

REMEMBER: A sketch is quick and somewhat rough, not a finished drawing. The purpose of these sketches is to help you develop ideas for a dynamic composition that draws attention to your hand as the main image in your drawing.

- Sketch two ideas in preparation for your final composition. Each of your sketches should feature your hand as the central or most important image.
- Each sketch should explore a different dynamic composition. You may try different poses of your hand and you may work horizontally or vertically.
- Consider all the space in the rectangle as part of your composition.
- You may add other shapes or images to the background to enhance the dynamic action of your composition.

You have 15 minutes to complete these sketches.

If you complete the two sketches before the 15 minutes are up, you may move on to Part 3.

Note: Students are provided with two rectangles 3 3/4"x T1 in which to sketch.

Part 3: Final Drawing

Directions: Select your most dynamic composition from Part 2, and develop it into a final drawing.

The final drawing should be completed in a more finished manner, using **line** in a way that enhances the sense of tension and dynamic action, and **contrast** to draw attention to the central focus in your drawing.

Do the final drawing in the rectangle provided.

Note: You may look back at Parts I and 2 to help you as you complete this part of the task.

It is all right to alter your final drawing somewhat from your sketch in order to improve upon it in any way. This final drawing will be evaluated on:

- the use of COMPOSITION to create a sense of dynamic action and tension;
- the use of LINE to enhance the sense of dynamic action and tension; and
- the use of CONTRAST to draw attention to the central focus in your drawing.

You will have (25) minutes to do Part 3. Do not continue on to Part 4 when you finish Part 3.

Scoring Guide for Performance Event Final Drawing

Criteria for final drawing:

- Skillful use of value contrast
- Careful consideration of the whole compositional space
- An effective use of line
- Hand must be the main focus.

Level	Description
4	The final drawing is a visually dynamic composition in which all the criteria are met in a highly successful manner.
3	The final drawing is a visually dynamic composition in which most of the criteria are met in a fairly successful manner.
2	The final drawing may be visually dynamic but the criteria are met in a limited manner, or the criteria are met fairly well but the drawing is not very dynamic or visually exciting.
1	The final drawing meets the criteria in a minimal way.
0	Non-scorable; no attempt was made or design is unrelated to task.

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STEP 4:

Review assessment items to identify areas that require change and revision. Once test items are written, the development staff experienced in each arts discipline should review the questions and exercises first for content concerns. It is best that reviewers do this independently and confirm that questions fit the framework and are correctly classified according to framework specifications. External experts should also review items for sensitivity and editorial concerns. Test questions should be revised accordingly.

Activity: Convene the test development committee and external specialists to review and revise assessment questions.

Review and edit based on the following qualities.

Items/tasks are–

- ❒ Comprehensive and faithful in addressing the arts framework.
- ❒ Fair in testing content that all students had an equal opportunity to learn.
- ❒ Realistic with respect to the contexts and problems encountered in the arts field.
- ❒ Authentic in requiring student response/performance that represents the arts area being tested, i.e., dancing, singing, acting or creating.
- ❒ Feasible in terms of time, space, materials and stimuli required.
- ❒ Reasonable in allocating enough time for students to think and generate a response.
- ❒ Clear in directions for students that include contextual clues that enable them to apply the appropriate knowledge/skills to address the question or problem.
- ❒ Explicit in criteria that are understandable to students and which enable scorers to distinguish between diverse levels of performance.

Also, review test items for–

- ❒ Elimination of controversial and sensitive topics.
- ❒ Balanced consideration of all student racial and ethnic groups.
- ❒ Sensitivity to students' varied backgrounds and regions.

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STEP 5:

Pilot test the items and tasks in school classrooms. The main reason for doing this is to find out how well students understand the questions and directions. Another is to check on what further refinements should be made to the wording or format of the questions. You also will learn if the test questions truly reflect current arts curricula and instructional practice. Particularly for the arts, the pilot can reveal, early on, the logistical possibilities and constraints of using specialized arts materials, equipment and stimuli with certain test items. Include in the trial a range of classrooms from across all regions of the state at targeted grade levels.

Activity: Administer questions to students both in one-on-one and group tryout sessions.

During the pilot sessions, make observations about the following:

- ☐ Clarity and complexity - are test directions and questions understood by students and teachers?
- ☐ Ease of administration - can questions be administered by all teachers using the same directions?
- ☐ Timing - is adequate time allotted for test items?
- ☐ Setting - can all classrooms accommodate the specific needs of the question, particularly production/performance tasks?
- ☐ Response sheet format - is there adequate space for student response? Are there unintended responses and why?
- ☐ Tools, materials, and stimuli - are these appropriate? adequately described? feasible to administer? cost effective?

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CHAPTER 7

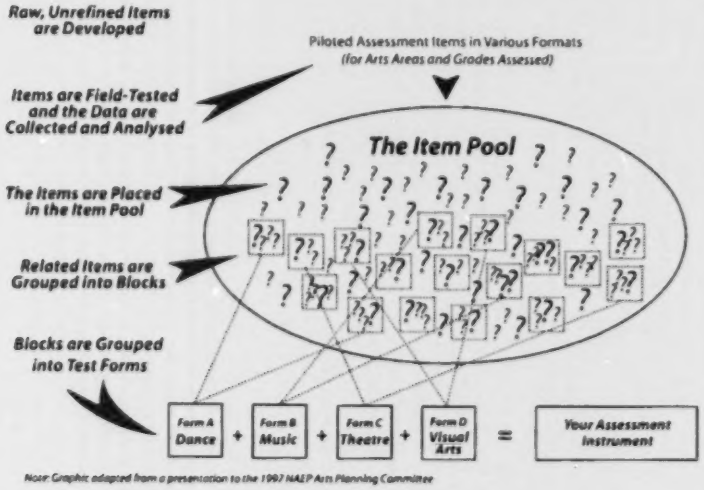
IMPLEMENT AND MODEL

Key steps in the implementation phase include:

1. **Build your assessment instrument.**
2. **Organize and administer the arts field test.**
3. **Score student responses and review field test results.**
4. **Coordinate and administer the assessment district or statewide.**
5. **Analyze test data and report findings.**

STEP 1:

Build your assessment instrument. This means creating the actual arts examination booklets for students. At this point, you have a bank or pool of assessment items, in different formats, that you've piloted and revised for feasibility. If you plan to administer the arts test to more than one grade and in more than one arts discipline, you will need various versions or forms of the arts test. These alternate forms are assembled by combining blocks of items from your assessment pool. Think of a block as a related group of questions and tasks created by dividing your item pool for a grade and arts discipline into subsets. Here is a graphic to help you visualize these ideas:


Raw, Unrefined Items are Developed
Piloted Assessment Items in Various Formats (for Arts Areas and Grades Assessed)
Items are Field-Tested and the Data are Collected and Analysed
The Item Pool
The Items are Placed in the Item Pool
Related Items are Grouped into Blocks
Blocks are Grouped into Test Forms
Form A Dance
Form B Music
Form C Theatre
Form D Visual Arts
Your Assessment Instrument

Note: Graphic adapted from a presentation to the 1997 NAEP Arts Planning Committee

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A more detailed list of key areas to consider in building your assessment instrument is shown in the following activity:

Activity: Create arts test booklets (the assessment instrument) for the grades and arts disciplines to be assessed.

Actions	Helpful Hints
Determine the assessment timing	This is the total period of time during which a test booklet is administered to the student. e.gs., grade 4 – 60 minutes; grades 8 and 12 – 90 minutes.
Determine if background questionnaires will be included	These are used to collect supplemental information about students, teachers and schools such as student demographics and arts education experience; teacher years of teaching experience in the arts area being assessed and instructional practices; and school characteristics, enrollment, arts program features and related information. Questionnaires also may be included for students with disabilities and limited English proficiency.*
Group items/tasks into blocks	Assessment items are grouped into blocks by dividing the item pool into related sets of questions for an arts discipline. The NAEP arts assessment blocks, for example, were designed around one or more stimuli such as a visual art work or video and consisted of related questions in different formats, i.e., multiple-choice and open-ended written questions with performance tasks. The NAEP art blocks took approximately 25-30 minutes to complete.
Assemble alternate test forms	Different test forms for the arts are assembled by combining item blocks for a grade and arts area so that a student can take the test in a single arts discipline. Although you may have alternate test forms, all are intended for the same purpose such as to assess student achievement toward your district or state's arts standards or outcomes.

** **The NAEP 1997 Arts Report Card** contains details on questionnaires. You will also find examples of thematic "blocks" in each arts area that integrate performance tasks with other types of test items.*

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STEP 2:

Organize and administer the arts field test. The field test is generally more extensive than the pilot. It is administered to check the adequacy of testing procedures such as test administration, test scoring, as well as how students respond to the questions. The field test will provide further information regarding the clarity, level of difficulty, and timing of questions. Field test data will help you make final revisions and select the items to be used in the formal system-wide assessment.

Activity: Manage your arts field test by addressing these responsibilities.

Key Responsibilities

1. Develop the administrative procedures and manuals.

2. Print field test booklets and questionnaires and produce other materials such as audio/videotapes, art reproductions and hands-on supplies.

3. Select a broad and representative sample of schools and students to participate including students with disabilities and limited English proficiency.(Ensure that students in the field test meet established requirements for instructional time in the arts discipline assessed.)

4. Establish a schedule of significant dates relevant to the field test. Your schedule should include dates for the arrival of

   a. principal test packages
   b. student arts test booklets, also dates for
   c. test administration
   d. deadline for return of tests

5. Train staff and/or hire outside experts to administer the field test.

One state printed booklets for their field test called "Test Sampler Drafts" with abbreviated test forms in the four arts areas for teachers to preview and use for instruction. See the introductory memo to the booklet on the following page.

Some states have regional test coordinators to administer assessments; others contract with external agencies such as Westat or the Educational Testing Service (ETS) for guidance. Staff members from such organizations have extensive training in administering large-scale assessments and collecting data on student achievements.

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As you organize your field test, take a look at the memo below that introduces the "test sampler draft" created for one state's high school arts assessment. Notice to whom the memo is addressed, what details it conveys, and how it encourages school districts and teachers to use the "test draft" to plan instruction. Also note that the sampler booklet is a way to release test items in advance of the field test for arts teachers to preview and use.

EXAMPLE

The State Department of Education

To: District Superintendents, Superintendents, Administrators and Principals of Public and Nonpublic Schools, Coordinators and Teachers of Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts

From: Assistant Commissioner for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Subject: Arts Test Sampler Draft for the High School Graduation One-Unit Requirement in Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts (Commencement-General Education Level)

This test sampler draft is being released to assist school districts in planning their instruction and assessment of student achievement related to the State Learning Standards for the Arts. Administrators and teachers should be preparing students to demonstrate proficiency in at least one of the four arts disciplines, and to achieve at high levels in the respective assessment. The sampler addresses dance, music, theatre and visual arts and includes examples of test item types, formats (on demand written, on demand performance and performance/portfolio), and ancillary materials. This sampler is the result of the collaborative effort of the State Education Department, Intermediate School Districts, arts teachers, supervisors, national consultants, cultural partners and professional arts associations. Our State teachers and administrators have actively participated in the development and student tryout of the arts assessments.

The Department will administer arts field tests in spring 2001 targeted for grade 9 students for selected samples of high schools. The purposes of the field tests are to further refine question formats and scoring materials in dance, music, theatre and visual arts. Once administered and returned to the Department, these field tests will be scored and evaluated so that assessments in dance, music, theatre and visual arts will be available for voluntary use in the 2001-2002 school year.

We invite you and the members of your staff to provide the Department with feedback on these preliminary materials. On the last page of the sampler is a comment sheet that may be faxed to our office or mailed to the address provided.

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STEP 3:

Score student responses and review field test results. This step highlights reliable scoring procedures as well as the recruiting and training of scorers. The information will help you process the data from your field test to select and refine test questions and scoring guides.

Multiple-choice questions can be scored by scanning test booklets. However, in an arts assessment, there are often large numbers of student-generated responses to score for open-ended questions and performance tasks. Scoring these types of responses requires trained assessor judgment in order to achieve a high level of reliability. Reliability means the degree to which the scores of individual students are consistent over repeated applications of the scoring criteria. To ensure reliability, you will need to recruit individuals who understand competent and creative performance in the arts disciplines assessed and train them to use appropriate criteria to discriminate between student responses of different degrees of quality.

Activity: Address these points to score student-generated responses.

TOPIC	POINTS TO COVER
Scoring Procedures	❒ Use focused, appropriate scoring guides that match criteria emphasized in your arts assessment frameworks. (Use the initial draft scoring guides you developed with test items; based on the results of your field test, you can further refine the guides.)
	❒ Recruit and train qualified scorers in the arts disciplines assessed.
	❒ Monitor scorer consistency by reviewing each scorer's work to confirm that the scorer applies the scoring criteria consistently across a large number of responses.
	❒ Document all aspects of your scoring procedures for technical reports.
Recruiting and Training Scorers *(Consider using arts discipline specialists along with measurement experts to conduct the training.)*	❒ Present and discuss the question/item to be scored and its purpose and rationale in reference to your arts standards and framework.
	❒ Present and clarify the scoring guide and criteria.
	❒ Discuss the thinking behind the scoring guide with a focus on the criteria that distinguish the various achievement levels. Use concrete examples of student responses called "anchor" responses to illustrate each achievement/performance level.*
	❒ Practice scoring a common set of sample student responses and discuss scores until scorers understand how to apply the guides.

**Examples of student work, to illustrate different performance levels for a task, are included in The NAEP 1997 Arts Report Card. Additional information about reliable scoring and training scorers can be found in recent editions of The NAEP Guide which describe large-scale assessment content and methods.*

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Reviewing Field Test results

At the time of the field test, collect examples of student responses of varying degrees of quality–representing a range of possible performance for each item. Select these as anchors or models for the achievement levels in your scoring guides. You can use the student examples in sessions to train scorers. Most importantly, you should review field test results by analyzing student responses to further design and improve your scoring guides. Consider, for example, if the criteria in your guides enable scorers to discriminate among diverse levels of student performance in a way that is not arbitrary.

With concrete student results in hand, you now have the basis for important discussions with arts content specialists about the validity of the test questions and tasks that your committees designed. Validity refers to the extent to which a test assesses what its designers or users claim that it assesses. Did the questions and items in the field test require students to apply the knowledge and skills, in your arts standards and assessment frameworks, to generate competent and creative products/performances? Do the student responses indicate that the test assessed a particular arts discipline fairly and comprehensively? Examining the student responses around these critical issues, as well as the practical and administrative ones, will enable you to make further revisions to items that were field tested in your arts assessment. Consider, too, using outside groups such as arts and assessment experts to further revise and conduct final sensitivity and editorial reviews of your item blocks for each arts discipline assessed.

Once you modify and select suitable items from the field test for your arts assessment, you are ready to:

1. Prepare final versions of assessment materials, i.e., stimuli, such as audio and videotapes and art reproductions; also consumable art supplies, and
2. Prepare, proof, and print arts test booklets and questionnaires.

Step 4:

Coordinate and administer the assessment either district or statewide. At this point in the process, you will focus on the administrative and logistical aspects of the arts assessment such as officially announcing the program system-wide and providing important dates and related details about school participation. How should you announce the program? What information should you convey? Below are three related examples of how one state with an arts testing program addressed these questions. Forms of communication like those shown are sent to schools and often posted at a state's web site in the arts and/or assessment listing of the site index. If you included arts educators and administrators in the development process and provided them with regular progress updates, there should be interest and enthusiasm among schools to participate in the assessment.

Activity: Use and adapt the following sample communication forms to announce your arts assessment program and to invite or require school participation. (Draw on the decisions you made in step 3 of the planning phase.)

EXAMPLE A: general announcement at the start of the school year

Fine Arts

September 2001

This school year, the State Board of Education will be offering a voluntary **State Achievement Test in the Fine Arts** for grades 9 and/or 10. High schools will have the option of administering the voluntary test during the State's Achievement Testing period, April 1 - 12, 2002, or during April 24 - 25, 2002. Schools wanting to enroll for the 9 and/or 10 voluntary arts test may do so on the *Enrollment Form* that will be sent to schools this fall.

EXAMPLE B: Letter to School principals – voluntary participation

July 6, 2002

Dear High School Principal,

This is to inform you that the State Board of Education will offer a voluntary Arts Standards Achievement Test in April 2003, for the high school level. The assessment will be offered in the areas of dance, music, theatre and visual arts and participating students will take the test in a single arts area.

This voluntary arts assessment is for students in grades 9 and/or 10. The test is aligned with the State Arts Learning Standards and takes approximately 90 minutes to complete. The results are for local use only–to determine how well students are meeting the arts standards. If your school participates, you have the option to administer the examine during the State Achievement testing period of April 1- 12, or during April 24-25.

To enroll your students, complete the Voluntary Test Enrollment Form that is enclosed with this letter. You can either fax or mail the form to the Assessment Division at _____

If you choose to enroll your school, you will receive testing materials in early March. Please keep the materials secure until testing time. After the test is administered, return all testing materials to the assessment coordinator by April 29, 2002.

Please share this information with the fine arts teachers in your building. If you have questions, contact the Assessment Division at _____ .

Sincerely,

Assessment Division Coordinator

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EXAMPLE C: arts test enrollment form for high school, target grades – 9 and/or 10

State Voluntary (or Required) Arts Test
Enrollment Form

Fax the completed form to _____ by October 5, 2001

Address and Contact Information

District Name: _____

School Name: _____

School Address: _____

List Art(s) Teachers and the Arts Discipline taught:

_____

_____

_____

Contact Person: *(All test materials will be sent to the attention of this person at the school address)*

_____

Participating Student Enrollment Counts:

	Grade 9	Grade 10
Dance	____	____
Music	____	____
Theatre	____	____
Visual Arts	____	____

Signature of Principal _____

STEP 5:

Analyze test data and report findings. Now that you have implemented your assessment plan, it's time to maximize the results of your work. Think again about the goals and how the results of your program can impact on your stakeholders. Most districts and states, perhaps like yours, design arts assessments to enable students to make progress towards the achievement of arts standards. Towards that end, the feedback and reports on test performance should be in clear, understandable terms that students and teachers can respond to and use to improve achievement.

Put simply, you want to collect and analyze the test data in such a way as to make the information meaningful to students, teachers, parents, administrators, policymakers, and the public. This may require a different type of report for each audience. But first, you have to gather and process the assessment results. To assist with this, you should have the support of the measurement expert in your system or one from an outside education research organization. The assessment data collected will be translated into numbers and perhaps can be conveyed visually in a graph or chart.

How do you hope to use the results of your assessment? What areas and arts education program needs could the test findings address for your situation? The activity below will help your advisory and development committees answer these questions. Selecting the target uses for your assessment findings will enable the measurement consultant to determine the best categories for organizing the test data, such as by a particular art standard, arts discipline, grade level and/or content strand. Student individual and group scores then will be summarized in a certain category according to best practice procedures for measurement scaling.

Activity: Determine and prioritize the internal and external uses for your assessment findings based on the arts education program needs in your district or state. (A few examples will help get your discussion started.)

Assessment Results

Internal Uses	External Uses
Motivate students to improve achievement towards arts standards	Garner support for an innovative school arts education effort
Focus professional development goals for district or state arts teachers	Retain or increase funding for arts resources and programs
Increase student instructional time in the arts for a grade level and/or arts discipline	Gain community advocacy and recognition for arts education
Strengthen a targeted arts learning area or arts discipline program	Achieve designation as a model site for a new arts initiative

Determining the uses for your findings also will help you decide what kinds of reports to write and for which audiences. Be sure to generate your reports in a timely fashion so as not to lose the impact of the testing event. NAEP produces a comprehensive set of reports for subject areas tested, targeted to specific audiences. Here are a few the different types of reports NAEP produces that may be relevant to your situation:

HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

In a non-technical style, this type is intended to answer general questions about the assessment that a parent, school board officer, or interested community member might ask. Think of it as addressing the "frequently asked questions" you faced throughout the program. You would also include promising student achievement results in focus areas to showcase the value of the arts to student learning.

INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT

This is the kind of report to produce for classroom arts teachers, principals, and other school administrators. Not only would it focus on findings related to arts curriculum and standards, but also it would include sample test items, performance tasks, and scoring guides that teachers could use in their classrooms. Additionally, it could show student test results by school or district.

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STATE REPORT

This type will be useful to policymakers and state department staff responsible for arts education. It would focus on arts assessment findings about overall program strengths and weaknesses in the arts disciplines tested. Findings would relate to student achievement of arts standards statewide and district-wide.

TECHNICAL REPORT

This report type is for documenting all the details of your assessment, including the design, item development, data collection, and analysis procedures. It does not report test results, rather it describes how you got them.

For further information on reporting and using test results, see the CCSSO publication, ***Handbook for Professional Development in Assessment Literacy****, included in the references on page 47.*

CHAPTER 8

BENEFITS OF ASSESSMENT TO ARTS EDUCATION

Whether or not it is linked to large-scale accountability systems, assessment holds great value for a wide variety of arts education audiences. Arts assessment can help curriculum designers and program administrators articulate goals and standards, identify program strengths and weaknesses, and indicate key targets for the allocation of resources. For parents and students, assessment results provide a profile of student learning. Young learners need feedback in order to refine and redirect their efforts.

For teachers, assessment can provide important information needed for success in the classroom. Results can lead teachers to answer the question: "Are my students actually learning what I am setting out to teach?" Effective assessment is an integral part of instruction and has its greatest value when it is closely tied to classroom practice.

ASSESSMENT AS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teachers can play an important role in the design and development of arts assessment, increasing their own knowledge and skills in the process. As one researcher from Educational Testing Service states:

> *We may have all the latest theories, and we may know all about construct validity and reliability, but teachers know the classroom and the teacher's perspective is invaluable to us. (ETS Trustee's Colloquy, "Performance Assessment," 1995, p.16.)*

By serving on state and local committees to plan assessment frameworks, teachers have the opportunity to closely examine curricular standards and clarify goals for instruction. By helping to design effective assessment tasks, teachers learn good teaching practice. The National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (NCRESST) recommends criteria for judging effective assessment tasks that match questions teachers should ask of their own instruction. (Herman, Ashbacher and Winters, *A Practical Guide to Alternative Assessment*, ASCD, 1992, p. 42) The following examples illustrate the similarities between good assessment tasks and good teaching:

- Do tasks pose an enduring problem that students are likely to face in school or in their future lives?
- Will tasks be seen as meaningful and challenging by students, parents, and teachers?
- Will tasks be engaging to students so that they will be motivated to do their best work?

Like their classroom colleagues, arts educators need professional development to stay current with content knowledge and to hone their instructional skills. Yet in most school districts, resources for the professional development of teachers in the arts are scarce. By involving teachers in assessment design, you can use local or state accountability funding for arts professional development purposes.

For example, in the Vancouver, Washington public schools, local arts teachers became involved in the district's early experiments with performance assessment. When the call went out from the district's Office of Accountability and Research for test item development, arts educators signed up along with their colleagues in science and writing. Led by district researchers, arts teachers took a shot at designing assessment tasks using the "Ready, Fire, Aim" approach suggested by Grant Wiggins. They targeted objectives, wrote prompts, designed protocols to capture student work using video, and tried out performance assessment tasks with teachers and students throughout the district. Later, teachers came together to look collectively at the student work, to discuss rubrics and issues of quality performance, and to revise and refine the tasks. Most importantly, teachers returned to their classrooms with increased clarity about arts learning and a wealth of new strategies to guide instruction. And, it was all paid for by the Office of Accountability.

Reflective Practice for Arts Educators

Even when not framed as part of an extensive district wide professional development effort, arts assessment can provide teachers a forum for reflective practice. Music educators have long gathered at festivals to collectively adjudicate student work. On a less formal level, two or three arts teachers can gather on their own to look together at the work of their students. Departments can use reflective practice protocols such as those developed by Steve Seidel and his colleagues at Harvard's Project Zero to "wonder" about student art works.

These conversations about student work—both formal and informal—can lead to the creation of collectively designed rubrics. With actual samples of student work in front of them, teachers can be encouraged to discuss and consider such questions as:

- What example of student work stands out as high quality?
- What features lead me to consider the work to be "excellent"?
- Did successful students approach the task in different ways than unsuccessful students?

Clearly divorced from the pressures of grading, teachers can openly discuss these important assessment issues with colleagues, building a community of arts educators who come to have shared understandings of excellence.

Local arts educators often tire of the seemingly endless need to "justify" the arts to school boards, principals, or parents. Yet, until the American public gains significant engagement in the arts, it seems likely that "advocacy"—making a compelling case for the importance of arts learning for every child—will continue to be an important part of arts education efforts.

A thoughtfully conceived arts assessment program can assist advocacy efforts by increasing public understanding of arts learning. Assessment can illuminate the often-elusive qualities of the arts. For example, performance assessments like those developed for the NAEP involve capturing student work on video for later viewing by raters. Local arts educators are discovering the value of sharing these video snapshots of learning (along with artifacts or portfolios) with school leaders and administrators, giving policy makers a look "inside" student performance in the arts. By sharing the "secrets" of arts learning—by clarifying the processes of critical analysis or creative composition that take place in the minds of students as they make art—arts educators can take policy makers further than the concert or gallery reception, helping them to discover that the arts have value beyond ornament or entertainment.

In order to maximize the potential of assessment for advocacy purposes, local arts educators might consider the following strategies:

- Lobby for the inclusion of the arts when reporting local student achievement data;
- Encourage local school boards to request a full and complete picture of student achievement in all of their school programs, including the arts;
- Ensure that reports or presentations about the arts focus on student learning;
- Design assessments that give evidence of students using their minds well while creating, performing and responding to the arts;
- Consider using the voices of teachers and, where appropriate, even students during informal arts assessment reports. A student describing their own process, intent and purpose for art making can provide compelling insights for school leaders.

The primary purpose of assessment in the arts is, finally, to improve teaching and student learning. A well-planned advocacy program linked to assessment efforts can help ensure that the important work of arts education will continue.

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Educational Organizations with On-line and Print Resources

Arts Education Partnership http://www.aep-arts.org

Educational Testing Service http://www.ets.org/

Music Educators National Conference http://www.menc.org/

NAEP Arts Assessment http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/arts/

National Art Education Association http://www.naea-reston.org/

National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (NCRESST) http://www.cse.ucla.edu/

National Dance Education Organization http://www.ndeo.net/

SCASS Arts Education Assessment Consortium
http://www.ccsso.org/scass/p_arts/index.html

Westat http://www.westat.com/

WestEd http://www.wested.org/

APPENDIX

The following performance exercise in dance for grades nine through twelve was developed by the SCASS Arts Education Assessment Consortium as an example of an assessment that might be done by a teacher in a classroom using the NAEP framework and the three arts processes of Creating, Performing, and Responding.

Unlike the NAEP Arts Assessment that consisted of "on-demand" exercises, or blocks of questions completed within a prescribed timeframe as part of the total assessment time, this "curriculum-embedded" example was designed to be conducted over two class periods. Other examples of assessments done "over-time" would be process portfolio collections and "best-work" portfolios.

The *CULTURAL TRADITIONS* exercise found on the following pages is built from the *National Standards for Arts Education* and follows the SCASS/Arts format that includes:

1. **The relevant national standards and the performance indicators,**
2. **A task description and summary of the activity,**
3. **The purpose and content being assessed,**
4. **A background and context for the activity,**
5. **Set-up and special instructions for the facilitator,**
6. **Materials and equipment required,**
7. **A script and administrative directions,**
8. **Criteria for scoring the work (shared with the students before the activity),**
9. **A student response sheet for collecting a narrative description of the student work, and**
10. **A scoring sheet for teachers.**

The SCASS Arts Education Assessment Consortium has a collection of performance exercise examples available and has been working on a web-based, assessment item development program. The items are being placed in a searchable database and will be available for teachers and other arts educators to use in constructing arts assessments.

Dance Exercise, Grade Level 9-12

Cultural Traditions

NATIONAL STANDARDS ASSESSED

1. **Identifying and demonstrating movement elements and skills in performing dance**
   Students:
   h. describe the action and movement elements observed in a dance, using appropriate move ment/dance vocabulary.

2. **Understanding choreographic principles, processes, and structures**
   Students:
   d. demonstrate the ability to work cooperatively in a small group during the choreographic process.

3. **Understanding dance as a way to create and communicate meaning**
   Students:
   d. demonstrate further development and refinement of the proficient skills to create a small group dance with coherence and aesthetic unity

TASK DESCRIPTION/SUMMARY

Total Time for Block: Two class periods: one session to explain the task and create the dance, and one session to perform the dance and complete the response form.

Students will collaborate to create and perform an original dance based on knowledge of another culture's traditions. Students must have done some research into a culture's dance traditions prior to creating the dance. The dance will contain a clear beginning, middle, and end, and include appropriate rhythmic and/or vocal accompaniment. Students will respond by identifying the elements of time, space, and force and will explain how and why these elements were included in their composition. In an open-ended extended question, the students will describe how the traditions of a culture have been expressed in their dance through:

Space: shape, level, direction, size, focus, pathway
Force: attack (sharp/smooth), weight(heavy/light), strength(tight/loose), flow (free flowing, bound, or in balance)
Time: beat, accent, speed(tempo), duration(long/short), rhythmic pattern

PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT

Students will be assessed on:

- exploring and improvising on prior knowledge of another culture's traditions
- composing/creating a group dance
- performing a group dance
- responding to their dance through description of movement elements using appropriate vocabulary.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

Students will need to have an understanding of traditions in various cultures (Native American, Latin American, African, Asian, European). Students will need to know dance terminology. Students will need to:

- remember extended movement sequences
- project while performing
- create combinations with variations of space, time and force elements
- either reflect authentic movements or abstract the essence of dance movements of the culture.

SET-UP AND SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR

Students will work in groups of 3-4 that are self-selected or teacher assigned.

Students will have been instructed to wear loose, comfortable clothing and bare feet or sneakers—no stocking feet. Students should have their name displayed on a 5"x8" card with a large marker and attached to their clothing in a manner to allow those viewing the video tape later to identify students for scoring.

In one corner of a large, open space (preferably a dance studio, theatre, or gym), have a technician set up and operate a VCR and television set. Leave as much free space as possible for students to dance.
Instructor administering assessment should display enthusiasm and a supportive, encouraging approach. Instructor should speak naturally to students and answer questions as fully as possible without supplying ideas/answers, etc.

Final performances must be videotaped. To ease the scoring process, students should announce the culture of their dance, the group number, and their individual name before the performance. Read the booklet entitled "Videotaping Performance Assessment" for further guidelines.

Once dance is videotaped, students will watch the video and be given remainder of assessment time to complete written task. Instructor will collect written student evaluations of dance and use these and video of session for final assessment of each of the four students.

MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

- Video camera (and operator)
- TV/VCR
- Blank tape
- Tripod, or person to operate camera
- 5" x 8" cards, large markers, and safety pins for name labels
- Note paper for responding to video
- Large open space where students can move safely
- Written task directions for students displayed in room

SCRIPT AND ADMINISTRATION DIRECTIONS

DAY ONE

SCRIPT: I am going to ask you to create an original dance based on the traditions of one of the following cultures, African, Asian, European, Latin, or Native American. Your dance will be approximately 2 minutes in length. As a group, you will generate movements for a dance that either reflect 1) authentic movements of the culture selected or 2) an abstraction of the essence of movement qualities of the selected culture. Separately you will explore and improvise movement that expresses aspects of your chosen culture. The dance should have a clear beginning, middle, and end, and the improvised movements you select should reflect and relate to the culture. As a group, create and include vocal and/or rhythmic sound to accompany your dance.

SCRIPT: You will have two sessions to do the following:

- On day one, you will improvise movements alone and then you will be placed in a group to create a group dance and create vocal and/or rhythmic sound to accompany the dance which will be video taped for scoring later.
- On day two, you will rehearse and perform the dance for video recording and respond in writing to your performance on a form provided.

SCRIPT: Based on your knowledge of the dance movement of the culture you are working with, improvise movement that either reflects authentic movements of the culture you have selected or abstracts the essence of movement qualities of the culture selected. You will have ten minutes to do this.

[Allow students 10 minutes to improvise.]

SCRIPT: In your group create and refine a 2 minute dance incorporating your improvised movements. Develop a vocal and/or rhythmic sound accompaniment for your dance. You have 45 minutes to complete this task.

[Allow students 45 minutes, announcing the time in 15 minute intervals to help them pace themselves.]

DAY TWO

SCRIPT: You will have 5 minutes to warm up and rehearse your dance. Each group will do their dance and it will be video taped. After all groups perform, the video tape will be replayed so that each student can complete the response sheet which reflects on how the dance incorporated dance elements. When your group is ready to perform, announce the culture of your dance, the group number, and each individual name before the performance.

[Videotape the second day performances, rewind the tape, gather the students around the monitor and provide the response sheets and pencils.[

SCRIPT: Please watch the video of your dance performance. Using the paper and pencil provided, please analyze your performance on the response sheet. You will have 10 minutes.

1) Using appropriate dance vocabulary, identify and describe the dance elements you used and varied in your dance.

2) How do your movements and use of dance elements relate to or reflect the culture you chose?

[After 10 minutes, the facilitator calls time.]

CRITERIA FOR SCORING

The rubrics on the following pages provide the basis for scoring the student work and use an analytic format which allows options in scoring. The rubrics are also found on a score sheet on a following page. Each component can be scored separately to provide diagnostic information for teachers/students. For a holistic score, add component scores together, then determine a range of scores for each performance level.

CREATING	
Level 4	• The dance has clear beginning, middle, and end. • Use of time, space and force elements enhances the theme. • Vocal and/or rhythmic accompaniment are fully integrated into the dance which clearly reflects the cultural tradition.
Level 3	• The dance has a clear beginning, middle, and end. • Efficient use of time, space and force elements relates to the theme. • Vocal and/or rhythmic accompaniment relate to the dance and reflect the cultural theme.
Level 2	• The dance has unclear delineation between beginning, middle, and end. • Efficient use of time, space and force is evident but does not clearly relate to the cultural theme. • Vocal and/or rhythmic accompaniment exist and at times reflect the cultural theme.
Level 1	• The dance shows little evidence of beginning, middle, and end. • Use of dance elements is minimal (time, space, force). • Disconnected or little use of vocal and/or rhythmic accompaniment.

PERFORMING	
Level 4	• Student performs with full commitment and intensity (projects while performing; remembers extended movement sequence). • Student demonstrates principles of alignment, balance and control. • Student uses variety in elements of space, time and force. • Student uses movements which blend with the accompaniment throughout the performance. • Student is always aware of self and others and responds to changing spatial relationship.
Level 3	• Student performs expressively with commitment (projects while performing; remembers extended movement sequence). • Student demonstrates principles of alignment, balance and control. • Student uses some variety in elements of space, time and force. • Student uses movements which blend with the accompaniment occasionally. • Student is aware of self and others and responds to changing spatial relationships.
Level 2	• Student performs with some projection, but has difficulty remembering the sequences. • Student demonstrates principles of alignment, balance, and control with some commitment. • Student varies space, time, and force elements infrequently. • Student is aware of self and others and occasionally responds to changing spatial relationships.
Level 1	• Student performs with no projection/doesn't remember extended movement sequences. • Student demonstrates minimum physical commitment and control. • Student has no variation in space, time, and force elements. • Student demonstrates little or no awareness of spatial relationships.

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RESPONDING	
Level 4	• Student expands and elaborates in describing key elements using dance vocabulary: Space-level, direction, shape, pathway, focus, range; Time-beat, accent, tempo, duration; Force-attack: sharp/smooth, weight: heavy/light, strength: tight/loose, flow: free-flowing, bound, or balanced • Student draws parallels, discussing more than one connection to cultural traditions.
Level 3	• Student identifies and describes key elements using dance vocabulary: Space-level, direction, shape, pathway, focus, range; Time-beat, accent, tempo, duration; Force-attack: sharp/smooth, weight: heavy/light, strength: tight/loose, flow: free-flowing, bound, or balanced • Student makes a connection to cultural traditions.
Level 2	• Student identifies some of the elements using dance vocabulary: Space-level, direction, shape, pathway, focus, range; Time-beat, accent, tempo, duration; Force–attack: sharp/smooth, weight: heavy/light, strength: tight/loose, flow: free-flowing, bound, or balanced • Student attempts to make a connection to cultural traditions.
Level 1	• Student describes dance using general vocabulary rather than dance vocabulary. • Student describes dance with no relationship to cultural traditions.

GROUP DYNAMICS	
Level 4	• Student actively participates in group by sharing ideas/ movements, listening and responding, leading initiatives, and expanding on ideas of others.
Level 3	• Student participates in group by sharing ideas/movements, listening and responding, following initiatives of others, and accepting ideas of others.
Level 2	• Student participates in a passive manner by accepting ideas/ movements of others, listening and responding in a limited manner.
Level 1	• Student shares few ideas and shows little response to ideas of others.

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STUDENT RESPONSE SHEET

Student Name _____ Date _____

Student Group Number _____

Cultural Tradition Selected _____

Teacher Name _____

1) Using appropriate dance vocabulary, identify and describe the dance elements you used and varied in your dance.

2) How do your movements and use of dance elements relate to or reflect the culture you chose?

TEACHER'S SCORING SHEET FOR CULTURAL TRADITIONS EXERCISE

Student's Name _____ Student's Group Number _____ Date _____

Cultural Tradition Selected _____ Teacher's Name _____

Mark a single score for each of the four components (Creating, Performing, Responding, and Group Dynamics) in the space next to the description that best fits the student's performance and again in the box at the bottom of each column.

LEVEL	SCORE	CREATING	SCORE	PERFORMING	SCORE	RESPONDING	SCORE	GROUP DYNAMICS
4		• The dance has a clear beginning, middle, and end. • Use of time, space and force elements enhances the theme. • Vocal and/or rhythmic accompaniment are fully integrated into the dance which clearly reflect the cultural tradition.		• Performs with full commitment/ intensity (projects while performing, remembers extended movement sequence). • Demonstrates principles of alignment, balance and control. • Uses variety in elements of space, time and force. • Uses movements which blend with the accompaniment throughout the performance. • Is always aware of self and others and responds to changing relationships.		• Student expands and elaborates in describing key elements using dance vocabulary: Space-level, direction, shape, pathway, focus, range, Time-beat, accent, tempo, duration; Force-attack: sharp/ smooth, weight: heavy/light, strength: tight/loose, flow: free-flowing, bound, or balanced. • Student draws parallels, discussing more than one connection to cultural traditions.		• Student actively participates in group by sharing ideas/ movements, listening and responding, leading initiatives, and expanding on ideas of others.
3		• The dance has a clear beginning middle, and end. • Efficient use of time, space and force elements relates to the theme. • Vocal and/or rhythmic accompaniment relate to the dance and reflect the cultural theme.		• Performs expressively with commitment (projects while performing; remembers extended movement sequence). • Demonstrates principles of alignment, balance and control. • Uses some variety in elements of space, time and force. • Uses movements which blend with the accompaniment occasionally. • Is aware of self and others and responds to changing spatial relationships.		• Student identifies and describes key elements using dance vocabulary: Space-level, direction, shape, pathway, focus, range; Time-beat, accent, tempo, duration; Force-attack: sharp/ smooth, weight: heavy/light, strength: tight/loose, flow: free-flowing, bound, or balanced. • Student makes a connection to cultural traditions.		• Student participates in group by sharing ideas/ movements, listening and responding, following initiatives of others, and accepting ideas of others.
2		• The dance has unclear delineation between beginning, middle, and end. • Efficient use of time, space and force elements is evident but does not clearly relate to cultural theme. • Vocal and/or rhythmic accompaniment exists and reflects the cultural theme.		• Performs with some projection, but has difficulty remembering sequences. • Demonstrates principles of alignment, balance, and control with some commitment. • Varies space, time, and force elements infrequently. • Demonstrates limited awareness of self and changing spatial relationships.		• Student identifies some of the elements using dance vocabulary: Space-level, direction, shape, pathway, focus, range, Time-beat, accent, tempo, duration; Force--attack: sharp/smooth, weight: heavy/ light, strength: tight/loose, flow: free-flowing, bound, or balanced. • Student attempts to make a connection to cultural traditions.		• Student participates in a passive manner by accepting ideas/ movements of others, listening and responding in a limited manner.
1		• The dance shows little evidence of beginning, middle, and end. • Use of dance elements is minimal (time, space, force). • Disconnected or little use of vocal and/or rhythmic accompaniment.		• Performs with no projection, doesn't remember movement sequences. • Demonstrates minimum physical commitment and control. • Has no variation in space, time, and force element. • Demonstrates little or no awareness of spatial relationships.		• Student describes dance using general vocabulary rather than dance vocabulary. • Student describes dance with no relationship to cultural traditions.		• Student shares few ideas and shows little response to ideas of others.
		• Not Scorable - Evidence is not relevant to task requirements or is too minimal to rate student performance.		• Not Scorable - Evidence is not relevant to task requirements or is too minimal to rate student performance.		• Not Scorable - Evidence is not relevant to task requirements or is too minimal to rate student performance.		• Not Scorable - Evidence is not relevant to task requirements or is too minimal to rate student performance.
		Score for Creating		Score for Performing		Score for Responding		Score for Group Dynamics

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